

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 17850 281900Z

ACTION NODS-00

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: CH US UK PINT

SUBJECT: HOLBROOKE CALL ON DAVID OWEN: CHINA

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE PAID 45 MINUTE CALL ON FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID OWEN OCT 26 ACCOMPANIED BY DCM. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON POSSIBLE FRENCH ARMS SALES TO PRC AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH JAPAN (REPORTED SEPTEL).

2. HOLBROOKE TOLD OWEN THERE ARE INDICATIONS THE FRENCH MAY BE DISCUSSING WITH PEKING POSSIBILITIES OF FRENCH MILITARY SALES TO CHINA. EMPHASIZING THE VERY SENSITIVE CHARACTER OF THIS TOPIC, HOLBROOKE SAID THIS COULD PRESENT SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH REMAINS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO ANY POSSIBLE WESTERN CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHINESE MILITARY STRENGTH. WHILE THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN VERY RESERVED IN DISCUSSING THE MATTER, INCLUDING THE RECENT VISIT TO PARIS OF A PRC MILITARY DELEGATION, IT WAS HOLBROOKE'S IMPRESSION THAT THIS ISSUE MAY HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED IN RECENT HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS.

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3. HOLBROOKE POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE SOME TYPES OF MILITARY OR POTENTIALLY MILITARY-RELATED SALES WOULD NOT CAUSE GREAT DIFFICULTY, SALES OF SOME ITEMS IN A "GREY" AREA COULD CAUSE PROBLEMS, AND THOSE IN A "BLACK" AREA INVOLVING, FOR EXAMPLE, NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE OF MOST SERIOUS CONCERN. HE SAID WE HOPE TO MAINTAIN VERY

CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BRITISH ON THIS MATTER,
WHICH INVOLVES COCOM. OWEN DOUBTED THE FRENCH WOULD
RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH THE CHINESE,
BASED ON THEIR GENERAL ATTITUDE AND THE PRECEDENT OF
FRENCH-SOUTH AFRICAN DEALS, AMONG OTHERS.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

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